

Message

From: Giancarlo, Mary Beth [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=688488C9E6804937AB6E6F32E6DE0066-MARYBETH GIANCARLO]
Sent: 6/18/2019 2:50:59 PM
To: Amy Pelka (Pelka.Amy@epa.gov) [Pelka.Amy@epa.gov]
Subject: RE: Gorge Dam's toxic stew is Cuyahoga River's biggest barrier to continued improvement

Apparently Ashtabula was delisted in 2014. Lol!

From: Loomis, Mark
Sent: Tuesday, June 18, 2019 7:12 AM
To: Pelka, Amy E. <Pelka.Amy@epa.gov>; Tuchman, Marc <tuchman.marc@epa.gov>; Giancarlo, Mary Beth <Giancarlo.Marybeth@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: Gorge Dam's toxic stew is Cuyahoga River's biggest barrier to continued improvement

FYI.

From: Lippert, Allison
Sent: Monday, June 17, 2019 2:25 PM
To: Korleski, Christopher <korleski.christopher@epa.gov>; Loomis, Mark <Loomis.Mark@epa.gov>
Cc: Kelley, Jeff <kelley.jeff@epa.gov>; Rowan, Anne <rowan.anne@epa.gov>
Subject: Gorge Dam's toxic stew is Cuyahoga River's biggest barrier to continued improvement

Hi Chris and Mark, here's the story from your interview with the Plain Dealer:

<https://www.cleveland.com/news/2019/06/gorge-dams-toxic-stew-is-cuyahoga-rivers-biggest-barrier-to-continued-improvement.html>

Gorge Dam's toxic stew is Cuyahoga River's biggest barrier to continued improvement

Updated Jun 16, 8:45 AM; Posted Jun 16, 5:00 AM

By Michael Scott, Special to The Plain Dealer

AKRON, Ohio – The biggest barrier to the Cuyahoga River's ultimate return to health stands 60 feet tall, spans 400 feet across a dramatic gorge and holds back 800,000 cubic yards of sediment contaminated with heavy metals, oil and grease.

"We've never done a dam this big, but we're figuring that out," said Marc Loomis, head of a federal task force planning to remove the dam by 2023. "But we've got to get the sediment out first and 800,000 cubic yards is a big deal, a very big deal.

"But it's also a big deal for the river. This will restore the natural pulse of the water, to make the Cuyahoga more of a living, breathing stream."

He said it is likely that crews will use a hydraulic dredging system similar to the one used to restore the Ashtabula River, which was removed from the U.S. EPA's Area of Concern list in 2014.

The Cuyahoga River is on the Area of Concern list, in part because of the Gorge Dam on the Akron border with Cuyahoga Falls and the mile-long reservoir and toxic stew behind it. The dam was built to hold water for a coal-fired power plant that operated there from 1912 to 1991. The plant was removed in 2009, but the dam remains.

But taking down the dam alone won't get the Cuyahoga off the bad list.

Right now, two impairments have been removed and seven impairments remain on the river:

- Restrictions on fish consumption - removed January 2019
- Degradation of aesthetics - removed November 2017
- Degradation of fish populations
- Fish tumors or other deformities
- Degradation of benthos (life in the sediment and bottom of the river)
- Restrictions on navigational dredging
- Eutrophication (excessive richness of nutrients, frequently due to runoff from the land) or undesirable algae
- Beach closings
- Loss of fish habitat

Three of the seven remaining impairments — fish populations, benthos and fish habitat — have “management actions” in place, according Chris Korleski, former Ohio EPA director and now director of the U.S. EPA Great Lakes National Program Office.

Korleski also said he and others hope the remaining four impairments may just “drop off over time if trends continue.”

That may be a bit optimistic, said Jennifer Grieser of Cleveland Metroparks and chair of

AOC Advisory Committee. She said the Cuyahoga River may someday be removed from the list without ever actually achieving the precise requirements to be de-listed because the “area” includes upstream tributaries and even nontributaries that have natural barriers to fish movement.

“At the end of the day, we may not get there,” Grieser said. “On the other hand, if you can prove that – that the targets could never realistically be reached – you can appeal to be de-listed, anyway.”

Allison Lippert
U.S. EPA Region 5
312-353-0967